

**Prepared Remarks of Commissioner Mignon L. Clyburn
FCC Field Hearing on Superstorm Sandy
New York City, New York
February 5, 2013**

To our distinguished panelists and to our audience, good morning. Thank you, Regional Administrator Pease, for your opening remarks, and on behalf of the Federal Communications Commission I wish to express my gratitude, to the General Services Administration and others responsible for making it possible to hold this critical forum.

At the FCC, we are afforded the incredible privilege of having a front row seat to some amazing developments in information technology. And I can say without any doubt that we have a lot to feel optimistic about when it comes to what the communications industry can accomplish.

But when we are hit with major weather events like Superstorm Sandy, we are humbled and reminded that despite all of these great advances, we still, as a nation, remain quite vulnerable.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with all who suffered the loss of loved ones and the loss of property during Sandy. I commend the efforts of first responders, as well as ordinary citizens who demonstrated unprecedented charity towards their neighbors and communities.

I was in Moncks Corner, SC in September of 1999. During Hurricane Hugo, I was balled-up in a dark corner near other family members who escaped from Charleston, listening to the first trees I ever loved being broken like toothpicks. I sat in fear as my grandmother's tin roofs from the barn, smoke house and parts of the house were being pulled away by what at the time felt like the huge, heartless hand of a giant.

So while the extent of Sandy's power and destruction was an unprecedented event for this region, most of us have felt the tragedy brought by natural disasters firsthand. We may not be able to prevent them from occurring, but what we can and must do is improve our ability to respond.

Throughout Sandy, we heard several reports about how federal, state, and local governments, as well as industry, were engaged in extensive coordination to restore important services and infrastructure to communities. I understand that the New Jersey Broadcasters' Association was very instrumental in working with FEMA and the FCC to help broadcast stations stay on the air. These stations were vital to providing information to communities.

And as communications regulators, we must do all within our power to prepare our wired and wireless communications networks, 9-1-1 systems, and other infrastructure for future unexpected events.

I applaud Chairman Genachowski for his hands-on approach and for recognizing and declaring early on that this Commission would come to New York, New Jersey, and other parts of the nation to learn about the challenges we face when it comes to the reliability of communications networks. I look forward to our panelists' testimonies and recommendations on these and related policy areas. Thank you.